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The Libyan Military Threat to the United States in the Mediterranean

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A Research Paper

DIA review
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NESA 84-10274C

October 1984

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office of
Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It was
coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. [redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, NESAs,

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The Libyan Military Threat to the United States in the Mediterranean

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Summary

*Information available
as of 20 September 1984
was used in this report.*

Qadhafi views the United States as a major impediment to his goals of pan-Arab and pan-Sahelian unity and Arab control of the Palestinian homeland. Seeking to reduce US influence in the region, he probably sees the military option as even more attractive as a result of Syria's resistance to US forces in Lebanon and the subsequent withdrawal of those forces.

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Qadhafi's willingness to use military force against the United States in the Mediterranean, however, will vary with his political fortunes. The gradual improvement of his military's ability to conduct limited strikes will reduce one of his inhibitions concerning their use—he will be less afraid of an embarrassing failure.

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US-Libyan military confrontation could develop from the following situations in descending order of likelihood:

- Qadhafi disrupts international shipping or air traffic, threatens military actions against Tunisia, Egypt, or Sudan, or dramatically increases his support for international terrorism.
- Qadhafi misinterprets US military activity in the region and orders his forces to preempt what he believes to be direct US military intervention.
- Qadhafi orders a token strike against US personnel, forces, or installations in the Mediterranean to increase his prestige in the radical world.

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Qadhafi can draw from a large arsenal of conventional and unconventional weapons to attack US interests in the Mediterranean:

- Libya's Navy and Air Force have the capability to carry out isolated surprise attacks against ships, aircraft, or port facilities.
- Unconventional military resources, such as frogmen, mines, remote-controlled boats, and possibly suicide units, are available for maritime terrorism or sabotage.

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Manning, training, and maintenance problems, however, limit the uses of this arsenal. Large joint air and naval operations, as occurred in the Gulf of Sidra in August 1981, could not be sustained for longer than a week.

Qadhafi almost certainly realizes the limited capability of his military forces and—in the absence of direct military pressure on Libya—will use them only if he perceives that he can publicly embarrass the United States while avoiding strong retaliation. He probably would use forces that could attack and withdraw unopposed and could offer Qadhafi an element of deniability after the strike.

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Qadhafi has already shown that he will respond militarily if he believes that the United States or other Western powers are threatening Libyan sovereignty through direct military action. A Libyan reaction similar to that in August 1981 poses a plausible threat to US forces. A US warship could be seriously damaged if the antiship missiles of one of Libya's ships are fired properly—a feat within the capabilities of some Libyan crews.

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The Libyan military capability in the Mediterranean will increase over the next few years as a result of improved training and the acquisition of more sophisticated military equipment. The limitations imposed by poorly educated manpower and a lack of modern repair facilities are so great, however, that Libya will be unable to carry out more than isolated quick strikes in the Mediterranean during the next few years.

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Libya on the Mediterranean

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The Libyan Military Threat to the United States in the Mediterranean

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Qadhafi's Readiness To Strike at the United States

Libyan leader Qadhafi, we believe, is willing to use his forces to challenge or retaliate against US assets in the Mediterranean. The scope and impetus for a strike may vary with his moods and perceptions, but the possibility that his predilection for bold action will override his fear of retaliation presents a constant danger.

Qadhafi often has threatened to use military force against the United States in the Mediterranean. He claims Libyan forces will turn the Gulf of Sidra into a "sea of blood" if US ships enter Libyan-claimed waters. He insists that Libyan missiles can hit NATO facilities in Greece and Italy that are bases for US ships and aircraft.

Though such bold rhetoric exceeds his real intentions, Qadhafi, on occasion, has backed his threats with force in the Mediterranean. Two Libyan fighters fired at a US reconnaissance aircraft operating off the Libyan coast in 1973. According to a Libyan defector, Qadhafi issued a standing order in 1980 to shoot down US aircraft operating south of the 35th parallel.

Such displays of hostile intent indicate that Qadhafi's fears of retaliation are sometimes outweighed by his inclination to assert Libyan power.

Qadhafi may be emboldened to take military action against the United States by the recent Syrian success in resisting US military pressure in Lebanon. Qadhafi probably was impressed by the dramatic propaganda victory Damascus achieved when the Syrians shot down two US fighter aircraft.

Throughout the confrontation, the Syrian force suffered what Qadhafi probably considers to be



Libyan leader Mu'ammarr Qadhafi

insignificant casualties. The Syrian experience in Lebanon provides Qadhafi with no new tactics for a Libyan attack against the United States, but he probably believes that there are military means of engaging the United States at low risk.

Qadhafi's Preferred Tactics and Targets— The Limited Engagement

Should Qadhafi decide to strike at US assets in the Mediterranean, he almost certainly will hit a single target with one or two attack units (for example, fighters, bombers, missile boats, frogmen teams, or a single load of mines). This accords with what we believe is his awareness of the limitations of his forces and his desire to reduce the potential for retaliation. We believe he will be attracted to options that:

- Have a high likelihood of success.
- Offer an element of deniability.
- Appear justifiable on the world stage.

We expect Qadhafi always will weigh the potential level of reprisal by his victim, but we do not believe he will be deterred by the prospect of losing a few "martyrs" in a strike or retaliation.

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Certain targets would be particularly attractive should Qadhafi decide to strike a token blow against US assets in the Mediterranean:

- *Unarmed military aircraft:* The Libyans have called US reconnaissance P-3 and RC-135 aircraft in the Mediterranean “spy planes.”

- *The US-manned cruise missile facility in Sicily:* Qadhafi has claimed that the cruise missiles at Comiso are directed against Libya. Even sabotage causing insignificant physical damage to the facility may impress his Third World audience that Libya is not intimidated by the US “threat.”

- *US tankers carrying petroleum to Israel:* Qadhafi could cite this as a way of leading the fight against Israel and its “patron.” He probably would use a submarine in such a strike to enhance deniability.

A Clash Between Libyan and US Military Forces— The Larger Engagement

Despite Qadhafi's preference to keep any clash with the United States isolated and small, he may initiate events that unintentionally lead to a direct confrontation between Libyan and US military forces. The potential for such a clash in the Mediterranean will

persist as long as Tripoli maintains a militant anti-US stance and Qadhafi is willing to engage in brinkmanship. Despite his well-developed instincts for survival, Qadhafi may misjudge when Libya's hostile acts will provoke US military retaliation.

A Libyan-US military clash could develop from any of several types of actions we believe Qadhafi might consider:

- A token strike against US assets in the Mediterranean, gambling that the United States cannot identify the attacker or would decide against a strong military response.
- Disrupting international shipping, exerting direct military pressure on Egypt or Tunisia, or increasing dramatically his support for international terrorism.
- Responding to US military activity in the region; misinterpreting, for example, a large “freedom-of-navigation” operation in the Gulf of Sidra as the first stage of a US assault.

Qadhafi also would probably order his Navy and Air Force to resist publicized US challenges to Libyan territorial sea claims. The form of that resistance will largely depend on how long US units remain in Libyan-claimed waters, the composition of the US force, and the degree of Libyan fear of US invasion.

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US-Libyan Clash—Importance of the First Shot

Libya has no capacity to defeat US forces militarily in the Mediterranean. It could inflict significant damage on a US military ship or aircraft, provided Libya can fire the first shot. [redacted]

We anticipate little warning of Libyan hostile intent.

Further, Libyan weaponry is now sophisticated enough that there often will be little visual or electronic warning that firing is imminent.^a US commanders operating under normal peacetime rules of engagement will have little chance to preempt a Libyan attack. [redacted]

If a Libyan missile or torpedo scores a hit—far from a certainty given the poor state of Libyan training—Tripoli will attempt to turn the encounter into a major propaganda victory. Qadhafi may be willing to sacrifice several Libyan sailors and airmen for an achievement similar to the Syrian shootdown of two US fighters over Lebanon last December. [redacted]

^a Launch preparations for Styx missiles are suspected when the firing platform is sailing at high speed; the ship must approach the target in a straight line to allow the missile's guidance system to stabilize. In peacetime, however, such an approach by a single boat would not usually be construed as an attack. [redacted]

The potential for a hostile reaction increases the longer a US ship remains off Libya, the more detectable the ship is (US ships at night or submarines any time may not be noticed by the Libyans), and the nearer the US ship approaches the Libyan shore.

Libya today is better able to resist a US challenge in the Gulf of Sidra than it was in August 1981. Since that confrontation, the Libyan Navy has conducted at least three major exercises that we believe were designed to prepare it to oppose a US carrier battle group. The Libyan Navy also has nearly twice as many guided-missile boats and submarines as it had in 1981, while the Air Force has at least 20-percent more pilots and a squadron of more advanced interceptors. Libya could react with over 100 fighter

Table 1
Libya: Potential Levels of Air and Sea Operations in the Mediterranean

Jet fighters ^a	115-125
Foxbats	20-25
Flogger E (Libyan piloted)	20
Flogger E (Syrian piloted)	20
Flogger B	10
Mirage F-1	10-15
Mirage 5	20
Fitter	15
Ships	28-32
Foxtrot SS	4
Nanuchka PGG	2
Wadi PGG	2-3
La Combattante PTG	5-6
Osa II PTG	5-6
Polnocny LSM	2-3
Natya MSF	4
PS-700 LST	1
Others (PB, PCFS, PTG)	3

^a Together, these aircraft could fly up to 150 missions per day for up to a week.

aircraft sorties a day and the deployment of over 25 ships and submarines. [redacted]

Libyan Strike Capability

Libya has a large and growing arsenal of modern weaponry capable of damaging US ships, aircraft, and shore facilities in the Mediterranean. The inventory consists of conventional assets (for example, missile boats, submarines, jet fighters, and bombers), which present the most potent threat, and unconventional assets ¹ (for example, drone boats, swimmers, and mines), which could be the first sent into action. Efficient use of these resources is hampered by training, manning, and maintenance shortcomings. [redacted]

¹ All references to unconventional assets in this paper pertain only to assets under Libyan military control and not, for example, to such potential assets as foreign terrorists. [redacted]

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- ^a Does not include reconnaissance or trainer aircraft.
^b Each air-to-air missile listed is capable of downing an aircraft.
 Each is fairly reliable.
^c Estimated.

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The Conventional Threat—Air

Fighters in an Antiair Role. Tripoli has established an air intercept threat by posting squadrons of MIG-25s, MIG-23s, SU-22s, Mirage 5s, and Mirage F-1s along the Libyan coast. Each aircraft carries air-to-air missiles, and several also carry cannon or rockets (see table 2). Libya's MIG-21s now are used primarily as trainers and probably no longer have an overwater role. []

Most Libyan fighter pilots probably can engage and down commercial and most unarmed military aircraft. They have demonstrated on numerous occasions an ability to intercept such aircraft over the central Mediterranean. []

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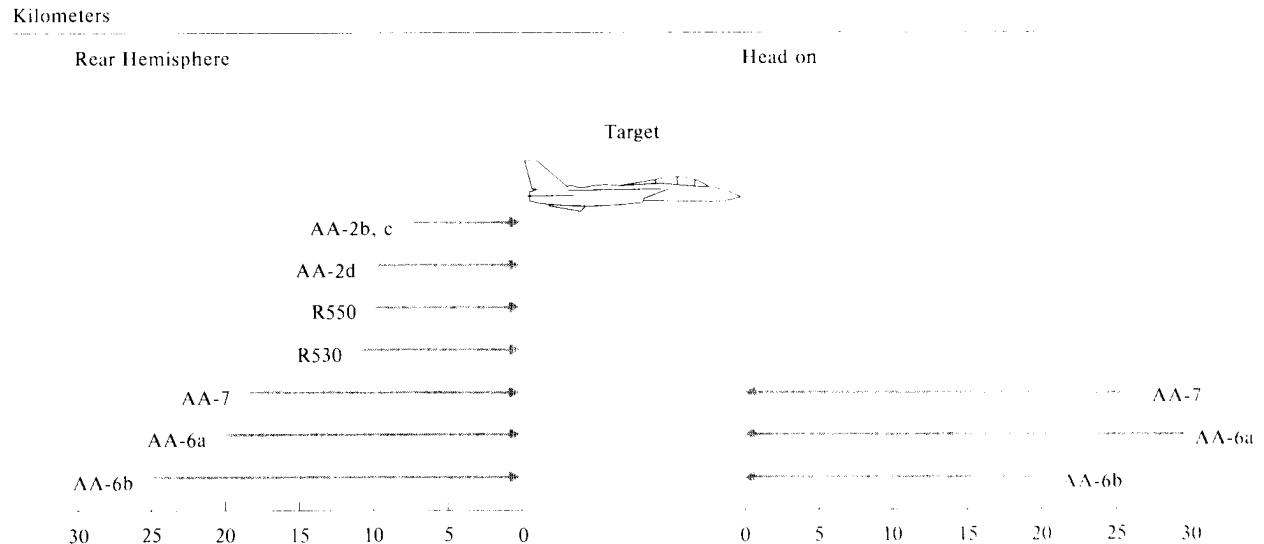
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Figure 1
Air-to-Air Maximum Missile Firing Ranges



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We estimate that Libya has enough qualified jet pilots to man only half of its fighters. We believe most of these pilots are not combat capable by Western standards. Most lack confidence, are unskilled at aerial combat maneuvering, and cannot fly combat missions at night. In encounters with US Navy fighter aircraft, only a few Libyan pilots have shown themselves poised and relatively professional.

The proficiency of Libyan fighter pilots is increasing as a result of increasingly sophisticated training.

Air combat training has become more realistic and more imaginative as the Libyans try to take better advantage of the

capabilities of their equipment. As a result, we believe the average Libyan pilot is now able to attack targets from more angles and at longer ranges than he could in the encounters with US fighters in August 1981.

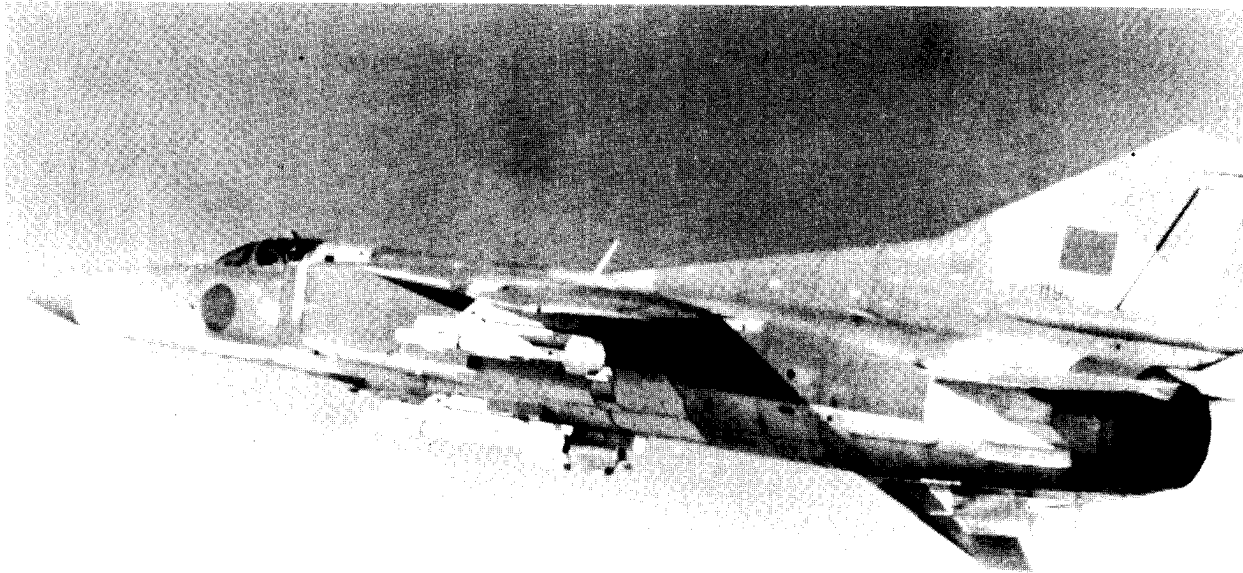
Libya's air training program, however, still has serious weaknesses. Night training is rare, and Libyan fighters will be unable to engage targets at night with confidence, at least over the next year or so. Moreover, flight training time and frequency remain low and the mastery of new skills commensurately slow.²

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Libyan MIG-23 interceptor armed with AA-2 missiles

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Libya may have air-to-surface missiles that can sink merchant ships and small combatants

1984. Moreover, Libyan pilots who defected in 1980 and 1984 claimed that Libya has AS-7s. We have not detected Libyan pilots training with these weapons, however, and we believe Libya has little capability to use them against naval targets.

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Fighters in an Antishipping Role. The capability of the Libyan Air Force to attack shipping has not been demonstrated, and we believe the threat is slight.

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Libyan fighters train in ground attack with bombs,⁴ cannon, or rockets and might use these against an unarmed merchant ship. These aircraft would not, in our judgment, be able to sink a naval combatant alert to the potential for attack.

Bombers: Threat to Shore Facilities. Libya's eight TU-22 Blinder medium bombers pose a slight threat to US or allied shore facilities along the Mediterranean littoral. Their ability to strike these establishments with almost no warning may attract Qadhafi to their use. The threat they pose is mitigated, however, by the fact that the TU-22s in the Libyan inventory are not configured to carry missiles.

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Libya's TU-22 crews are not well trained.

⁴ We believe Libya possesses only unguided or "iron" bombs.

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**The Conventional Threat—Naval**

We believe the Libyan Navy could threaten shipping in limited actions (striking one or two targets at a time) but does not yet have the ability to cause more destruction with its afloat inventory of 116 surface-to-surface missiles. Libya has 29 missile combatants, each able to carry four French-Italian Otomat or Soviet-built Styx surface-to-surface missiles. Both of

these weapons can sink a ship with a single shot. Few Libyan crews have test-fired a Styx or Otomat, however, and some of the newer La Combattante missile boat crews may not even have conducted a dry run. Nonetheless, the Libyan Navy probably has enough trained technicians to maintain and fire at least 25 percent of the missiles—enough to engage a few targets at a time.

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Table 3

Libyan: Naval Threat to Shipping

Ship Type	Inventory	Principal Weapons	Remarks
Nanuchka PGG	3	4 SS-N-2B, C (Styx)SSM 1 Twin SA-N-4 SAM	Relatively new. Believed to be in good operating condition. Probably carries "C" variant of SS-N-2 missile, but this remains unconfirmed. (The SS-N-2C can be fired much quicker and at longer range than the SS-N-2B.) SA-N-4 surface-to-air missile only for short-range self-defense. Crews trained in Soviet Union prior to delivery.
Wadi PGG	4	4 Otomat SSM	Crews were well trained in Italy in 1981-82, but training level has been allowed to decline since then.
Osa-II PTG	12	4 SS-N-2B, C (Styx) SSM	Probably carries "B" variant of SS-N-2 missile, but this remains unconfirmed. We have little information on state of training, but they are frequently at sea.
La Combattante IIG PTG	10	4 Otomat SSM	Very new. Last three or four to be delivered probably are not yet fully manned. None of the crews have had advanced weapons training at sea.
Foxtrot SS	6	22 torpedoes 44 mines	Poor as attack submarine. Chances of hitting a moving target more than 5 kilometers away would be very slim. Capable of laying 10 mines with no difficulty, more with some training. Not presently capable of attacking other submarines.
Dat Assawari FF	1	4 Otomat SSM 4 Albatross SAM	Being refitted in Italy since 1979, but should be returned to Tripoli this year as Libyan-flag ship. Will require at least a few months to train crew on its new weapons before it can threaten shipping.
Other ships/boats that pose slight threat to shipping:			
Brave PTG	3	French Nord SS-12 short-range wire-guided missiles	Poor materiel condition.
Gharyan PCFS	4	BM-21 rocket launchers	Rocket launchers for shore bombardment. Poor state of training.
Polnocny LSM	3	140-mm rocket launchers	Rocket launchers for shore bombardment.

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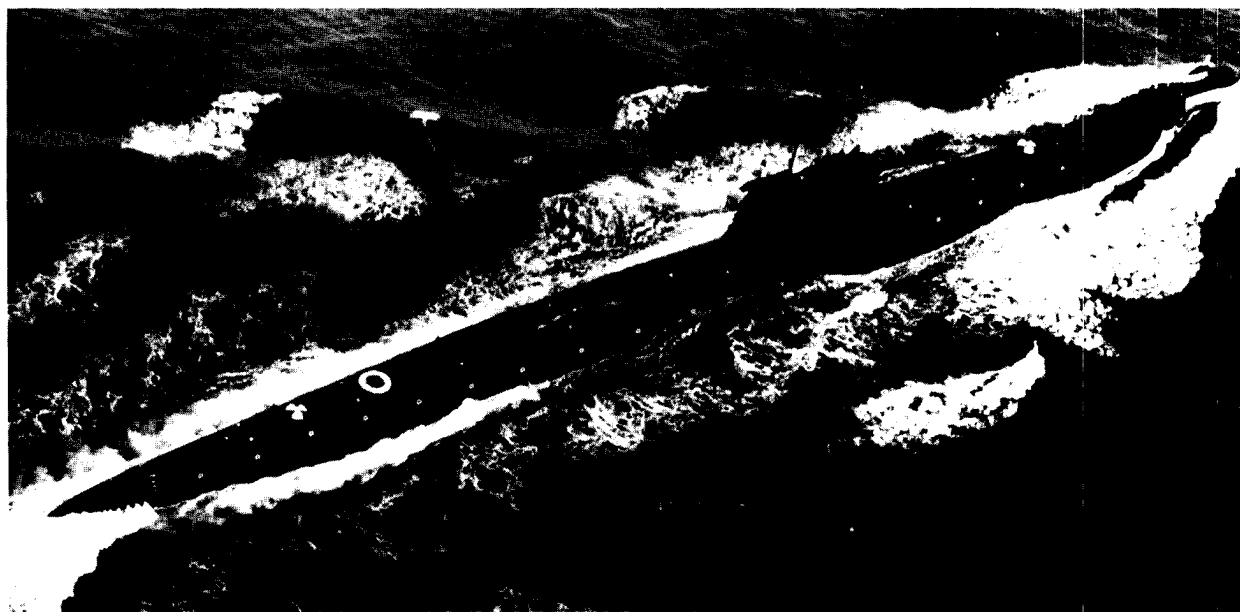
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Libyan Nanuchka missile boat

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Libyan Foxtrot submarine

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Libya's six Foxtrot-class submarines add the potential of sneak attack to the naval threat. They could torpedo a moored ship without warning and perhaps escape undetected. They could lay as many as 10 mines in heavily traveled waters along the Mediterranean littoral. Several factors, however, inhibit their use in attacks against ships sailing in open waters:

- The Foxtrots have short-range weapons and sensors. We estimate that the submarine's sonar has a range of 3 nautical miles against a surface target; its torpedoes probably have a maximum effective range of 5 nautical miles against a moving ship. Chances of striking a moving target at over 3 nautical miles are very slim.
- They are relatively slow. They probably cannot "sprint" over 12 knots while submerged, and pre-positioning for an attack would be very difficult.
- [redacted] the Foxtrot crews probably are not trained in coordinated attack tactics.

Despite the submarines' limitations, Libyan Navy planners have shown a predilection toward their use, possibly because they perceive that the presence of a submarine can intimidate potential victims.⁵ [redacted]

Limiting the Naval Threat. Manning problems hinder Libya's Navy. Experience is at a premium in any fleet that, like Libya's, doubles its size in five years.

[redacted] many of the enlisted men had never seen a ship before reporting aboard [redacted] most officers are skilled only in administering discipline. The low educational level of most recruits also sharply reduces the amount of training that can be absorbed in a short time. [redacted]

Further limiting Libyan naval capabilities is the infrequency of exercises conducted by the crews. We do not believe any Libyan crew trains at sea more than a few days each month. The training that does occur usually involves basic techniques of gunnery and maneuvering by a single ship. An increase in the

sophistication of training has been noted in the last two years—three fleet-wide multiphased exercises have been staged—but it has not been enough, in our opinion, to fill the need for intensive basic training.⁶ [redacted]

Naval and Air Readiness

We believe that Tripoli can conduct operations involving most of its ships and aircraft for up to a week. Operations for a longer period will involve only a few units at a time. If the Libyans envision a single hostile act, they will handpick their most capable platform, best commander, and most skilled technicians. If the plan requires fielding a large force for a short period, they can partly overcome inexperience by directing a large number of warheads to a target. [redacted]

The Libyans can bring ships and aircraft into action for brief operations with no advance notice. [redacted]

[redacted] two to four jet fighters, often with missiles loaded, are usually kept on alert at each fighter base along the coast during daylight hours. Previous operations have demonstrated that such aircraft can scramble rapidly against potential targets over the central Mediterranean. [redacted]

Within four to six days the Libyans can make ready most of their ships and most of the aircraft for which pilots are available. In August 1981, for example, the Libyan Air Force scrambled over 100 jet fighters in 36 hours in reaction to a US "freedom-of-navigation" operation in the Gulf of Sidra. [redacted]

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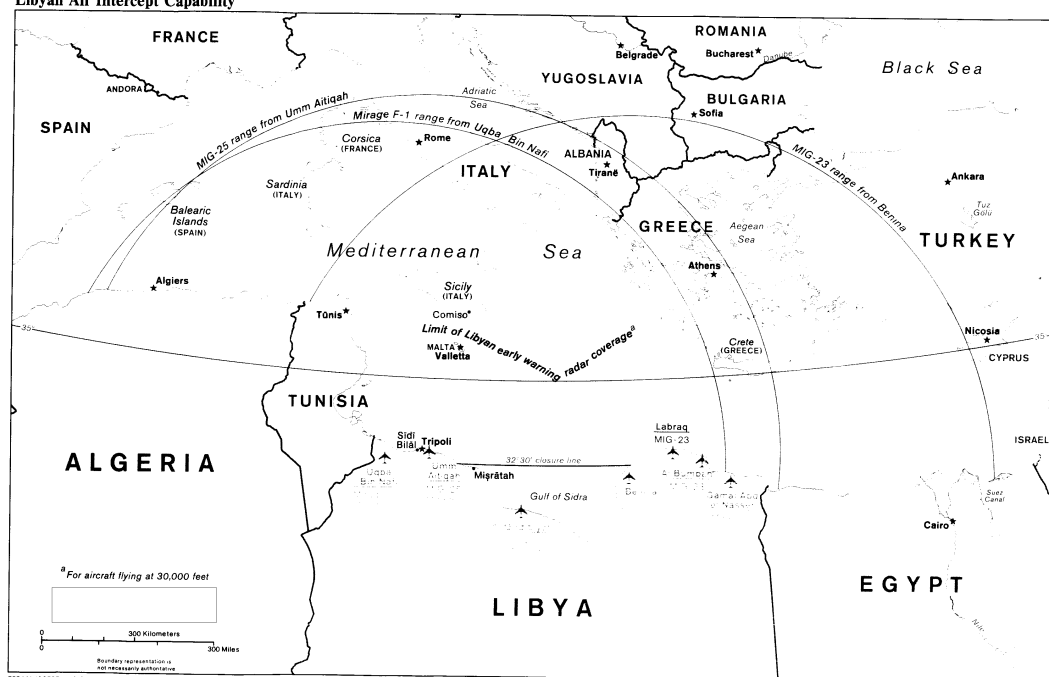
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Libyan Air Intercept Capability



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Libyan TU-22 bomber

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Maintenance and resupply difficulties, however, prevent sustained operations by Libyan forces. Even with widespread maintenance support by foreign personnel, we believe technicians are too few and the supply system too inefficient to keep Libya's massive inventory operable in its entirety.

demolitions, mines, remote-controlled boats or aircraft, and midget submarines. All can be carried to the area of the target on merchant ships or fishing boats. We believe that the Libyans have generally neglected maintenance and training of their unconventional assets, except frogmen. Even so, we believe that most of these assets could be available for brief operations within a matter of weeks.

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The Unconventional Threat

Colonel Qadhafi traditionally has favored the use of unconventional force. Terrorism, sabotage, and isolated surprise attack offer him a means of exerting power without exceeding the capacities of Libya's conventional forces. Further, Qadhafi may see such methods as involving little risk of preemption or retaliation because they:

- Usually provide no warning of hostile intent until the attack is initiated.
- Often provide an element of deniability even after the attack.
- Generally are not viewed as a declaration of war by the world or the victim.

The Libyans can use any of several assets in an unconventional strike against shipping or shore facilities in the Mediterranean, including swimmers with

Qadhafi's Military Reach in the Mediterranean

The Libyan military threat is focused in the central Mediterranean. Tripoli also can inflict minor or random damage in an area extending eastward to Beirut and westward to Gibraltar. (s)

Libya detects ships and aircraft transiting the central Mediterranean with fair reliability.

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Libya's Unconventional Arsenal**Frogmen/Naval Commandos****The Naval Commandos**

the frogmen receive training in underwater demolition and long-distance swimming. They pose a serious threat to moored shipping and also can conduct sabotage ashore.

Libya's armed forces, they are well trained and professional

Zodiac rubber rafts, probably two-man minisubmarines, and other swimmer-delivery vehicles are available to assist them on their final approach to the target.

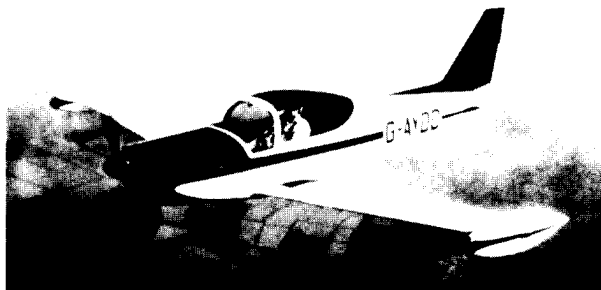
Naval Mines

Libyan merchant ships can plant mines in the Mediterranean covertly, with little difficulty, and in large numbers (a single ship can handle a load of 100 mines). We believe that the Libyan merchant ship "Ghat" carried out the recent mining of the Red Sea. The Red Sea incident illustrates the ease with which minefields can be sown if precision is not a prerequisite. Libyan submarines also could sow up to 10 mines covertly. Libyan warships, bombers, and transport aircraft each could lay as many as 20 mines, but at the risk of being exposed in the process.

We believe that Tripoli has a variety of moored and bottom types, detonated by acoustic, magnetic, or contact devices. Some of these include delayed activation, making them particularly difficult to sweep. Some of the mines can be planted in waters as deep as 290 meters. Libya's largest mines can sink a ship.

Remote-Controlled Boats

Libya has remote-controlled boats or drones. According to defense attache sources, the Libyans would load these boats with explosives and direct them into ships. Almost any type of Libyan-owned pleasure craft



Saia Marchetti light-strike aircraft

could be converted for such purposes, but three types of boats are part of this program. The US defense attache in Stockholm reports that Swedish-built Storo-Biscay cabin cruisers probably will be the control platforms, but some also may be used as drones carrying explosives. Two open boats, 24-foot Marina-Marins and 27-foot Q-26s, probably have been outfitted as drones, according to Defense Department sources.

A defense attache source states that these boats have been poorly maintained, but we believe that 10 to 15 probably could be prepared for action within two weeks. We anticipate that they would be used within 30 kilometers of shore and in quiet seas where they could breach the hull of almost any ship.

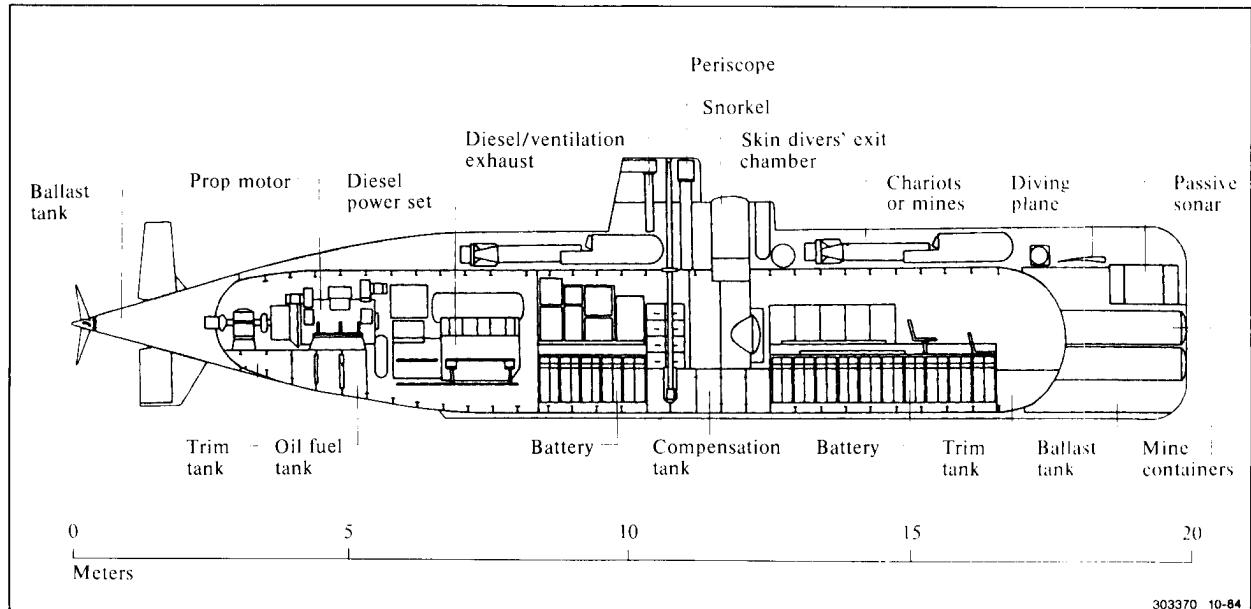
Remote-Piloted Vehicles

Libya probably has a modest capability to use small pilotless aircraft to attack ships in the Mediterranean. The defense attache in Rome has reported that Tripoli has Italian-built Mirach-70 target drones and Mirach-100 reconnaissance drones. Laden with a small amount of explosives (15 kg or less), they could be flown into a ship. Such attacks almost certainly would be controlled by a person on land or in a helicopter and aimed at a target close to shore. We believe that damage would be light, but a hit on the bridge of a ship could cause casualties.

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M-100 DE minisubmarine being built for Libya

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Suicide Attack

Libya periodically contemplates "suicide" attacks against US ships in the Mediterranean.

The US defense attache in Tunis reports that Tripoli has been seeking volunteers for a corps of suicide swimmers to be trained at the frogman school at Sidi Bilal.

A handful of zealots could stage a few spectacular incidents, but we believe that Tripoli's chances of sustaining a suicide campaign in the absence of a threat to Libyan national survival are poor. Few Libyans are likely to volunteer to serve Qadhafi in such a manner, and of those who do, few are likely to have technical backgrounds strong enough for pilot or advanced undersea training.

Minisubmarines

According to the defense attache in Belgrade, Yugoslavia has two M-100DE minisubmarines that may soon be delivered to Libya. These minisubmarines can carry swimmers and swimmer delivery vehicles or a small load of naval mines up to 830 kilometers.^a The submarines pose little threat to ships transiting open seas, but they could land saboteurs or lay a few mines near Mediterranean ports. Other minisubmarines are widely rumored to be in the Libyan inventory, but we cannot confirm their presence.

^a This maximum range requires extended surface operations at slow speeds. Operations would be more likely to be conducted at less than 75 kilometers, mostly submerged.

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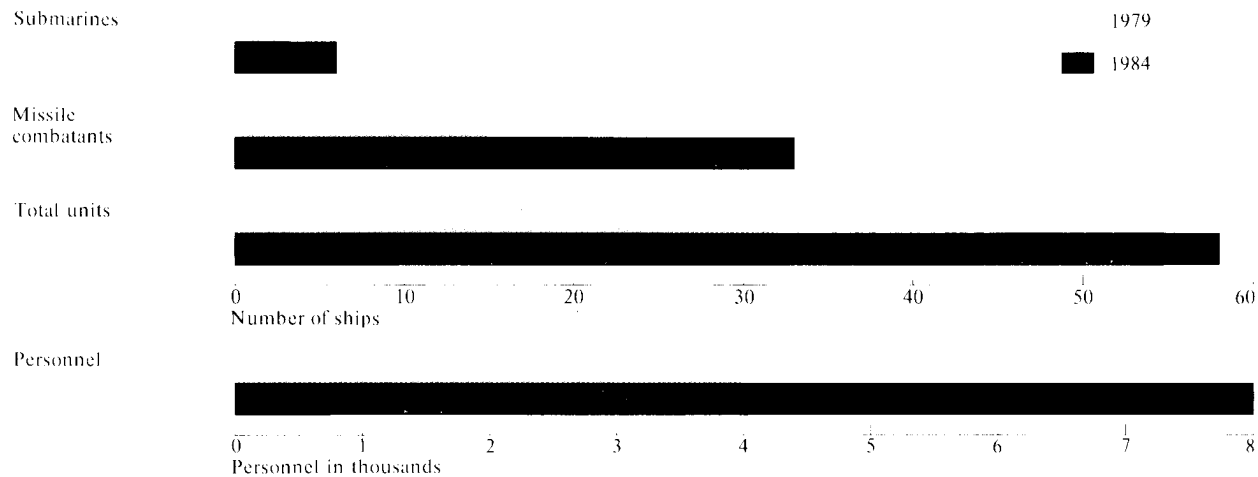
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Figure 3
Growth of the Libyan Navy

Note changes in scale



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Libya's missile-armed ships and aircraft generally restrict their operations to the central Mediterranean. Libya has not yet developed an at-sea or in-flight refueling capability that would allow its units to linger in the eastern or western Mediterranean. Moreover, fighter aircraft normally remain inside the coverage of Libya's land-based radar because of their reliance on ground controllers. Libyan ships are unlikely to initiate an attack beyond the protection of Libya's fighter aircraft.

Beyond the central Mediterranean, Libya is much less able to find and destroy a selected target but could cause widespread random damage. Libyan merchant ships sail throughout the Mediterranean and can deposit mines in shipping lanes. TU-22 bombers and submarines also can travel anywhere in the Mediterranean and could inflict considerable damage on targets of opportunity. Poor intelligence and training, however, limit their ability to select in advance and destroy a military target (for example, a particular ship or shore facility).

Frogmen can go on merchant ships or fishing boats anywhere in the Mediterranean. In our view, their

stealth and ability to selectively attack moored ships and shore facilities make them very attractive to Qadhafi for strikes outside the central Mediterranean.

Outlook

Qadhafi's willingness to use military force against the United States in the Mediterranean will vary with his political fortunes. The gradual improvement of his military's ability to conduct limited strikes will reduce one of his inhibitions concerning their use—he will be less afraid of an embarrassing failure. We anticipate that the following developments would make him bolder than he is now:

- Sustained pressure from exiled opponents he believes are supported by the United States and others.
- A dramatic rise in Arab-Israeli tensions.
- Public challenges to Libyan territorial sovereignty claims.
- His perception that Moscow will intervene in the event of hostilities with the United States (a guarantee we believe Moscow is unlikely to offer Qadhafi).

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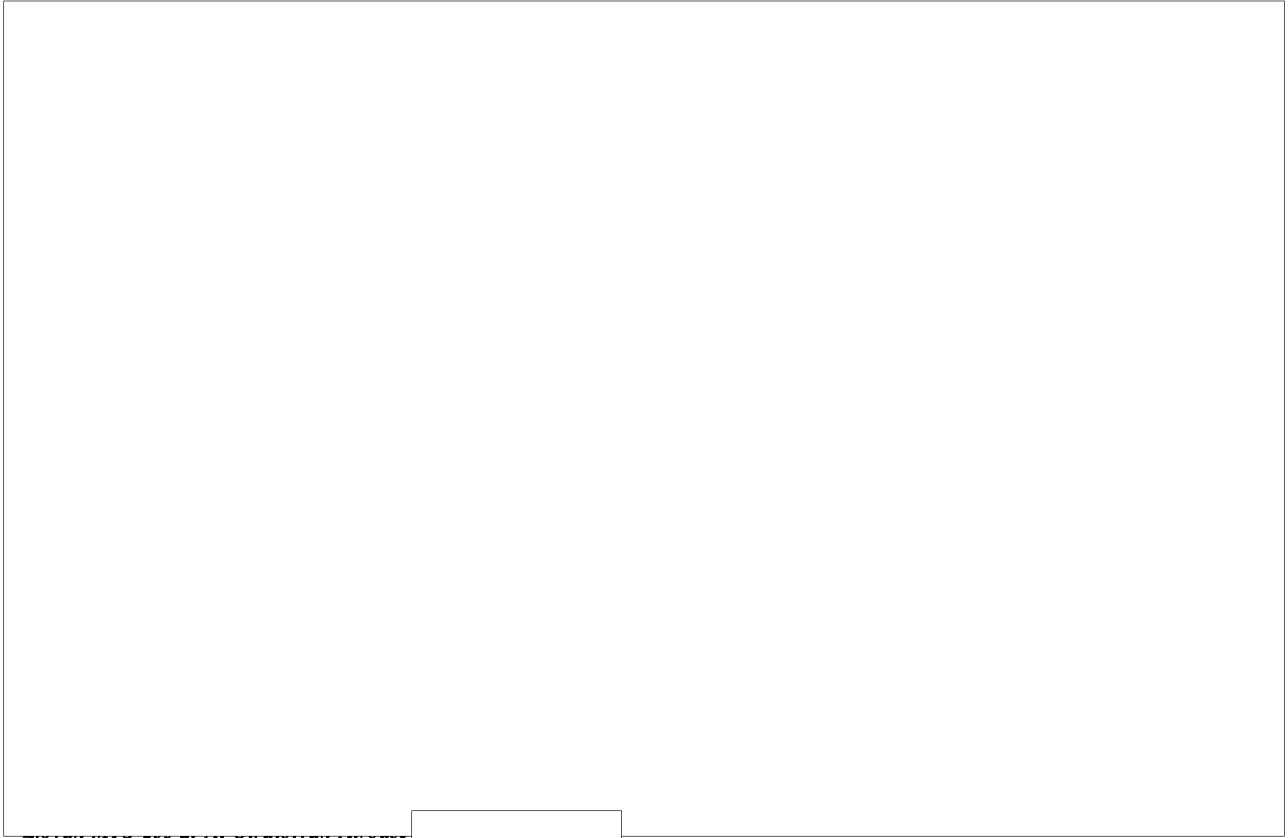
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Libya's continuing efforts to upgrade training will permit it gradually to absorb its massive arsenal and enhance its capabilities. Improvements in the last two years include more sophisticated air-intercept training, Libya's first test firings of Otomat antiship missiles, and its first realistic naval warfare exercises.

[REDACTED]

Continued recruitment will help the Libyan military gradually to fill its ranks. Even modest retention levels will help fill a critical need for experienced personnel. Using these assumptions, Libya is likely to have at least 20-percent more jet pilots and be able to fully man all of its guided-missile patrol boats in two years. [REDACTED]

Tripoli also is seeking new equipment to increase its threat in the Mediterranean. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Libya plans to install a network of coastal defense missiles to defend a 90-kilometer-wide security belt along sections of the Libyan coast.

[REDACTED]

Improvements will be partly offset, however, by shortcomings in military training and maintenance. The poor education of recruits limits the scope and impact of training. Maintenance difficulties increase as the inventory ages. Moreover, we see no sign that Libya's maintenance and logistics infrastructure will support within the next few years the dramatic improvement necessary for the Navy and Air Force to sustain intensive operations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Libyan Threat to the Mediterranean



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Appendix

Foreigners in the Libyan Military

Foreigners render important assistance to the Libyan military. Foreign technicians conduct nearly all sophisticated maintenance of Libyan ships and aircraft. Foreign advisers are found at nearly all operational levels, and some foreign personnel operate Libyan weapons. []

[] Tripoli wants to reduce the foreign advisory presence, probably for economic reasons. [] Libya is considering sizable cuts, but it is not clear whether they will be fully implemented. We believe that cuts of more than 30 percent would significantly reduce the overall readiness of the Libyan military. Even with cuts of 75 percent, however, Libya could still prepare selected units for a single isolated strike in the Mediterranean. []

We expect that foreign military advisers will have little role in a Libyan decision to embark on a hostile campaign. Qadhafi usually makes such decisions, and he has shown himself to be fiercely independent of foreign counsel. Foreigners perhaps unknowingly may help Libya prepare for a strike, particularly a limited one. []

Syrians

Since 1980, Syrians have manned a squadron of MIG-23 fighters for the Libyan Air Force at Benina Airbase. The Syrian personnel are generally better trained than their Libyan counterparts and have conducted more professional operations. This squadron has been more aggressive than any other in the Libyan Air Force in executing Libyan air defense policy. []

We believe the squadron would follow Tripoli's orders to engage most air targets within their reach—about 330 km north and west of Benina Airbase—as long as they perceive the Libyan policy to be one of self-defense. The Syrians may waver, however, over orders to attack a clearly innocent target or any target from

a country that enjoys good relations with Damascus.⁸ []

Soviets

Some 1,100 to 1,500 Soviet military advisers, instructors, and technicians permeate the Libyan military establishment, providing essential training and maintenance. We believe that they do not operate or control any Libyan weapon systems except in training. We do not know whether Soviets routinely sail with Libyan ships or submarines. []

Moscow will try to avoid responsibility for hostilities initiated by Tripoli but may quietly support or acquiesce in limited anti-Western actions. The Soviets may, for instance, coach Libyan ground controllers through an air intercept but avoid a formal command role. In addition, Soviet naval units could covertly pass locating information on potential targets approaching the central Mediterranean. []

Other Warsaw Pact

Czechoslovaks, Poles, Bulgarians, Romanians, and East Germans (probably totaling 500 to 800) provide specialized instruction and technical assistance to various segments of the Libyan military. Most Czechoslovaks, for example, support the Libyan Air Force with instruction and maintenance on Libya's Czechoslovak-built L-39 jet trainers and L-410 transports. The Poles work primarily with Libya's MI-2 Hoplite helicopters and Postgate/LP-10M coastal surveillance radar network, both Polish built. The East Europeans are unlikely to become directly involved in Libyan hostilities; they probably would follow the Soviet lead in helping the Libyans prepare for an engagement. []

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